

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 12049

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SNAR TH OVIP (MONDALE, WALTER)  
SUBJECT: RECENT NARCOTICS DEVELOPMENTS IN THAILAND:  
VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT

BEGIN SUMMARY: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN NARCOTICS CONTROL IN THAILAND CAN BE DESCRIBED AS A MIXTURE OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EVENTS. THE RTG IS CONTINUING TO ARREST IMPORTANT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS AND TO SEIZE NARCOTICS IN ALL TYPES AND QUANTITIES. PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN WILL VISIT RANGOON IN LATE MAY IN AN ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE THAI-BURMESE RELATIONS AND PERHAPS TO CONSIDER POSSIBILITIES FOR COOPERATION IN NARCOTICS CONTROL ACTIVITIES. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE, THE ABSENCE OF A PERMANENT SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD CONTINUES TO PLAGUE RTG EFFORTS TO MAKE PROGRESS IN THE AREA OF CROP SUBSTITUTION, AND HAS LED TO SOME DRIFT IN THE FIELD OF NARCOTICS CONTROL IN GENERAL. RECENT CHANGES IN SENIOR POLICE OFFICIALS IN THE POLICE UNIT MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR NARCOTICS CONTROL HAVE HURT THE RTG ENFORCEMENT EFFORT. END SUMMARY.

1. THE RTG CONTINUES TO MAKE LARGE SCALE SEIZURES OF NARCOTICS AND TO ARREST IMPORTANT VIOLATORS OF NARCOTICS LAWS. IN RECENT WEEKS THE FOLLOWING EVENTS HAVE TAKEN  
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PLACE:

MARCH 22, THE RTG ARRESTED NINE PERSONS IN A SERIES OF RAIDS IN BANGKOK. ONE OF THOSE ARRESTED WAS THONGPHAN PLUKPANYA, THE WIFE OF MAJOR TRAFFICKER ARUN SAE CHUA (AKA TS'AI A-LUN). ARUN FLED TO TAIWAN IN FEB 1978, AFTER JUMPING BAIL IN THAILAND. HE WAS

LATER ARRESTED IN TAIWAN FOR NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING.

APRIL 10 POLICE MAJOR GENERAL PHAO SARASIN OF THE POLICE NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION CENTER ANNOUNCED THAT PNSC OFFICERS HAD SEIZED 20 KILOS OF HEROIN IN A BANGKOK HOTEL ROOM. ONE OF THOSE BELIEVED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CASE, BUT ESCAPING ARREST WAS THE SON OF ARUN SAE CHUA (SEE ABOVE).

APRIL 21 THE RTG ARRESTED CHAN HSIH-TSIN, A HEROIN REFINERY OPERATOR, AND SUNG HONG KWAH, A CHEMIST, AND SEIZED 60 KILOGRAMS OF HEROIN AS WELL AS REFINERY EQUIPMENT LOCATED AT CHAN'S HOUSE IN THONBURI, ACROSS THE RIVER FROM BANGKOK.

2. THE RTG HAS ALSO PROPOSED A NEW DRUG LAW WHICH WOULD INCLUDE MORE STRINGENT PENALTIES FOR NARCOTICS VIOLATORS, AND THE DEATH PENALTY FOR THOSE CONVICTED OF TRAFFICKING IN CLASS ONE NARCOTICS, I.E. HEROIN, MORPHINE, AND OPIUM.

3. IN LATE MAY PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK WILL VISIT RANGOON WITH A VIEW TO IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE BURMESE. ONE BENEFIT WHICH MIGHT BE DERIVED FROM AN IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE BETTER COORDINATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IN THE AREA OF NARCOTICS  
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ENFORCEMENT. GENERAL KRIANGSAK'S RECENT EDICT THAT THE RTG WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE THE PRESENCE OF ARMED MEMBERS OF THE SHAN UNITED ARMY AND OTHER BURMESE DISSIDENT GROUPS ON THAI SOIL SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO BETTER RELATIONS WITH RANGOON. WHILE THE USUAL RUMBLINGS OF DISCONTENT HAVE BEEN HEARD ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER DURING THE BURMESE MOHEIN IV OPERATION, NEITHER SIDE HAS CHOSEN TO MAKE A SERIOUS PUBLIC ISSUE OF ANY OF THE INEVITABLE CROSSBORDER INCIDENTS ARISING FROM SUCH AN OPERATION. THIS MIGHT BE AN INDICATION THAT BOTH SIDES ARE WILLING TO MAKE AT LEAST A TOKEN EFFORT TO IMPROVE RELATIONS.

4. THE RTG NARCOTICS SCORECARD IS NOT TOTALLY POSITIVE, HOWEVER. RTG POLICY CONTINUES TO DRIFT IN MANY AREAS OF NARCOTICS CONTROL. THE DRIFT IS CHIEFLY DUE TO THE VACANCY IN THE POSITION OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD. THE FORMER HEAD OF THE NCB, JUDGE PRAMUK SAWATDIMONGKHON, RETURNED TO THE JUDICIARY AT THE BEGINNING OF FEBRUARY. SINCE THEN THE RTG HAS BEEN UNABLE TO SETTLE ON A SUCCESSOR. ARMY GENERAL WITHUN YASAWAT CONTINUES TO

BE MENTIONED AS A LEADING CANDIDATE; HIS RECENT RETURN FROM JAPAN, WHERE HE HELD SINECURE DUTIES AS SUPERINTENDENT OF THAI STUDENTS, MAY INDICATE THAT WITHIN, PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK'S ORIGINAL CHOICE FOR THE NCB POSITION, WILL BE APPOINTED. THE NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD IS THE VEHICLE FOR COORDINATING ALL RTG NARCOTICS CONTROL EFFORTS, AND THE ABSENCE OF A SECRETARY GENERAL HAS HAMPERED THE THAI EFFORTS.

5. THE RTG ENFORCEMENT EFFORT HAS BEEN FURTHER HINDERED BY HIGH-LEVEL PERSONNEL CHANGES IN THE SEVENTH SUB-DIVISION, THE PRINCIPAL ANTI-NARCOTICS POLICE UNIT IN THAILAND. SINCE DECEMBER 1977, SEVERAL EXPERIENCED, CAPABLE, HONEST, AND EFFECTIVE OFFICERS HAVE BEEN REPLACED IN CONFIDENTIAL

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AN IRREGULAR MANNER BY OFFICERS WHO HAVE NOT, AS YET, PROVEN THEMSELVES HONEST OR AS EFFECTIVE AS THEIR PREDECESSORS. THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SEVENTH SUB-DIVISION HAS SUFFERED AS A RESULT.

6. COMMENT: PRIME MINISTER KRIANGSAK AND OTHER SENIOR RTG OFFICERS UNDOUBTEDLY HOPE THAT VICE PRESIDENT WILL COMMENT FAVORABLY ON THE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS REPORTED ABOVE, BOTH IN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND IN MEETINGS WITH THAI SENIOR OFFICERS. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT KRIANGSAK MAY MAKE A GENERAL PITCH FOR MORE MATERIAL SUPPORT IN NARCOTICS AREA. WE HAVE HAD NO RECENT INDICATION FROM THAI THAT KRIANGSAK WILL RESURFACE HIS WISH FOR HELICOPTERS BUT THIS IS ALWAYS A POSSIBILITY.

7. ONCB AND PROF PHISIT ARE ABOUT TO SURFACE A REVISED CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM FOR ACCELERATED INTERNAL RTG REVIEW AND APPROVAL. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS REVIEW WILL BE COMPLETED BY RTG IN TIME FOR VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT AND THAT KRIANGSAK MAY REQUEST OUR SUPPORT. WE WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO INFORMALLY ASSESS PROPOSED CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS AND WILL SUBMIT OUR COMMENTS IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER. END COMMENT. WHITEHOUSE

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## Message Attributes

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